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SUBJECT Army Demands Command of Guard Troops

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The Czechoslovak General Staff has just transmitted to Čepička a memorandum requesting that all armed units in the country be placed under command of the army. This action, led by General Kratochvíl, is directed particularly at the border guard and the internal guard (VS), which are now under the Ministry of the Interior, under Rudolf Barák.
2. The request is made to counter the pressure of the Communist Party, which recently took into its own hands the promotion of all officers above the rank of captain. In actual practice the border guard and the internal guard are actually commanded by the Party through General Oskar Jelen, who is assisted by Col. Jindřich Kotal, and who really runs the Ministry of the Interior instead of Barák. 25X1
3. Jelen and Kotal are political officers only, and are backers of Antonín Novotný, first secretary of the party.
4. The general staff, threatened on the point of the officer corps by the Party, wishes to deprive the Party of the support of these two guard forces. The unified command of all armed forces under the Ministry of Defense is much desired by Čepička, but is opposed by Široký, who wishes to keep a balance between the two forces. 25X1

It is very doubtful whether the plan will be accepted by the majority of the cabinet. In the meanwhile, the party continues its pressure on the army, and as of 14 October 1953, obtained the foundation of the military political academy for the education of officers coming from the Party.

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